

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Where can contract information be obtained?

Information on the Federal Relay Service (FRS) contract is available on the official government FRS website (www.gsa.gov/frs).

2. What services are offered on the new FRS contract?

The new contract continues to offer the following six (6) FRS services, which were offered on the previous contract, plus a new customized solutions service:

- Federal Video Relay Service (FedVRS)
- Captioned Telephone service (CapTel)
- IP relay or FRS on-line (FRSO)
- Relay Conference Captioning (RCC)
- Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS (TTY/Voice))
- Speech-to-Speech (STS)

3. How is the new contract an improvement over the old FRS contract?

The new contract will more accurately allocate payment of services among the using agencies. In the past, FRS services were paid for by only those Federal government agencies who are centrally-billed, FTS2001 contract users. FTS2001 contract direct-billed agencies and non-Federal agency users received the service, but could not be allocated costs.

Additionally, the FRS support contract offers a new customized solution service, which will enable Federal agencies or organizations the ability to provide FedVRS for all their hearing impaired employees. Many agencies' firewalls and network security infrastructure currently prevent the IP-based functionality of FedVRS to be used by employees with hearing and/or speech disabilities.

4. How will this new FRS payment approach, whereby agencies pay for service using a direct order/direct bill funding model, affect the users?

Individual, authorized hearing and/or speech impaired users of FRS will not be affected. However, Federal agencies and other user organizations will need to establish and issue a task order against the FRS support contract for a direct ordering and direct billing arrangement with Sprint in order to pay for all minutes used on a monthly basis when using any of the six services offered by FRS. The advantages for agencies and

organizations will be that they will only pay for the services they use, and they will have the capability to monitor usage minutes by authorized, individual users of any or all of the three FRS telephonic services and/or the three FRS Internet-based services.

5. What are the next steps Federal agencies, non-Federal entities and non-government organizations (NGOs) should take after contract award?

Federal agencies will need to ensure that they have Designated Agency Representatives (DARs) that can order FRS services. Users can then communicate their needs to their DARS so that the services can be ordered from Sprint and be made available to authorized agency and organizational users. If NGOs or non-Federal entities do not have DARs, they will need to take steps to establish a DAR for the purposes of using the new FRS contract (see FAQ question No. 10.). Agencies requiring customized solutions to deal with firewalls and other security related issues affecting FRS services should coordinate their requirement with Sprint in preparation for submitting it to the GSA contracting office for a scope determination and approval.

6. Who pays for an agency's usage (minutes used) on all six FRS services and any customized solutions that may be entered into by an agency and Sprint?

As indicated above, each agency or organization pays for all minutes used for all services and for customized solutions.

7. How does an agency or an organization place an order for FRS service?

Your DAR will place a task order with Sprint for any, or all of the six FRS services. This will establish a direct ordering and direct billing arrangement between the agency or organization and Sprint. Instructions will be posted on Sprint's website.

8. How will users determine if an agency has a DAR?

A list will be provided to users by the FRS Program Office upon request.

9. If an agency does NOT have a DAR how do they order FRS services?

A DAR is an individual who is appointed and authorized by an agency or organization to order service(s) under the new FRS contract. Normally, this individual would also have the authority to obligate funds on behalf of their agency or organization. After appointment, the agency or organization DAR will request a "DAR" form from Sprint to order FRS

services. Once the form is completed and returned, Sprint can accept a “task order” from the agency or organization.

10. How can a person become a DAR within their agency?

Processes for appointing DARs are determined by individual agencies and organizations.

11. Are there restrictions on who may order services?

Yes, orders will be issued only by the DARs appointed by user agencies.

12. Who or what determines whether or not an agency or organization is “authorized” to use FRS services?

GSA Order ADM 4800.2E “List of, Agencies and organizations are eligible to use the General Services Administration (GSA) Services Schedule.” This official list includes Federal Executive agencies, Eligible users, International organizations, Contiguous U.S. Tribes, and Alaskan Tribes.

13. When can agencies order services under the new FRS contract?

GSA estimates that this will be within 120 days of contract award. In the interim, the old FRS contract will continue to operate and be available for use.

14. What is GSA’s role in the customized solution process?

GSA will conduct an in-scope determination and evaluate the proposed solution to ensure that prices are fair and reasonable. GSA will then add the proposed solution to the FRS contract via modification making the solution available for the agency to place an order.

15. What is the duration of the transition period for Federal agencies?

The transition period for Federal agencies will be from July 1, 2007, through December 31, 2007. During this period, Federal agencies will be transitioning from paying FRS surcharges on FTS2001 monthly bills (or not paying anything for FRS services) to a direct ordering/direct billed environment. All Federal agencies are expected to be fully transitioned over to direct ordering/direct billing on January 1, 2008.

16. What if there are Federal agencies that have not issued a task order and established a direct ordering/direct billing arrangement with Sprint by December 31, 2007?

Those Federal agencies, who desire to use FRS services but, for whatever reason, do not establish a direct ordering/direct billing arrangement with Sprint by December 31, 2007 will only be able to use the TRS (Voice/TTY) service, formerly known as Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD), on January 1, 2008. TRS (Voice/TTY) is the only mandated telecommunications relay service in accordance with the Telecommunications Accessibility Enhancement Act of 1988, Public Law 100-542. No other FRS service will be available for their use until the agency issues a task order against the FRS support contract and establishes the direct ordering/direct billing arrangement with Sprint.

17. What is the duration of the transition period for non-Federal entities and NGOs?

The transition period for non-Federal entities and NGOs will be from July 1, 2007 through December 31, 2008.

18. What if there are non-Federal entities and NGOs that have not issued a task order and established a direct ordering/direct billing arrangement with Sprint by December 31, 2008?

Those non-Federal entities and NGOs, who desire to use FRS services but, for whatever reason, do not establish a direct ordering/direct billing arrangement with Sprint by December 31, 2008 will only be able to use the TRS (Voice/TTY) service, formerly known as Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD), on January 1, 2009. TRS (Voice/TTY) is the only mandated telecommunications relay service in accordance with the Telecommunications Accessibility Enhancement Act of 1988, Public Law 100-542. No other FRS service will be available for their use until they issue a task order against the FRS support contractor and establish the direct ordering/direct billing arrangement with Sprint.

19. Can agencies' tailor their billing requirements with Sprint?

Yes, agencies will work directly with Sprint to tailor their bills to meet their agency billing and accounting requirements.

20. Will GSA conduct a Certification and Accreditation (C&A) of the contractor or their sub-contractor's operating systems?

GSA has plans to conduct a Certification and Accreditation (C&A) of Sprint's (or their sub-contractor's) operating systems for the three, IP-based services (FedVRS, RCC and IP Relay) in accordance with FIPS 199 and NIST's FISMA Publication 800-60, and GSA IT Security Policy.

21. What is the time frame for the C&A to be completed?

This OMB and GSA C&A process is expected to take 120 days. GSA will make this information available to agencies once the C&A is completed.

22. Three of the FRS services offered are Internet-based and Federal agencies are operating in a Post 9/11 environment. How will GSA handle unique security and firewall issues for the agencies?

Under the new FRS contract, Federal agencies may decide on customized solutions that will enable Federal agencies to address their security and firewall issues specifically for that customer's mission. Agencies will work directly with Sprint to find a solution their security and firewall issues that have heretofore prevented hearing impaired employees from using FedVRS, RCC and IP-Relay.

23. Will agencies be required to interface only with Sprint in the day-to-day operation of FRS, and what will GSA's role be under the new contract to ensure the awardee does not take advantage of the customer?

The FRS Program Office will continue to provide day-to-day quality customer service by:

- (1) Educating all customers on service offerings and new technology.
- (2) Maintaining knowledge of the contract and making information available to customers through several points of contact.
- (3) Serving as a customer advocate.
- (4) Ensuring that the contract meets customer needs.
- (5) Monitoring the quality of service provided